

New Application  
Preliminary Amendment

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-9 (Cancelled).

Claim 10. (Original): A solidifying material for a cell electrolyte solution, characterized in that said solidifying material comprises a film or sheet of a polymer having properties that said polymer is insoluble in said cell electrolyte solution but said polymer absorbs and solidifies said cell electrolyte solution, and a backing reinforcing said film or sheet; and said backing is a woven fabric, a nonwoven fabric or a porous film.

Claim 11. (Currently Amended): A solidifying material according to claim 10, wherein said polymer is a block ~~or graft~~ copolymer as defined in any one of claims 1-8 comprising, as segments A, a polymer non-compatible with said cell electrolyte solution and, as segments B, a polymer compatible with said cell electrolyte solution, and absorbs and solidifies said cell electrolyte solution; a smallest unit of said block copolymer is A-B-A; and to each of said segments B, at least one group selected from the group consisting of a carboxyl group, an ester group, a hydroxyl group, a sulfonic group, an amino group, a cyclic carbonate group and a polyoxyalkylene group is bonded via a -S- bond or a -C- bond or a graft copolymer comprising, as segments A, a polymer non-compatible with said cell electrolyte solution and, as segments B, a polymer compatible with said cell electrolyte solution, and absorbs and solidifies said cell electrolyte solution; and to each of said segments B, at least one group selected from the group consisting of a carboxyl group, an ester group, a hydroxyl group, a sulfonic group, an amino group, a cyclic carbonate group and a polyoxyalkylene group is bonded.

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Claim 12. (Original): A solidifying material according to claim 10, wherein said polymer is a polymer which comprises, as a principal component, polyacrylic acid, poly(N-vinylacetamide), poly[(2-oxo-1,3-dioxoran-4-yl)methyl (meth)acrylate] or polyacrylamide.

Claim 13. (Original): A solidifying material according to claim 10, which is in a form of particles having an average particles size not greater than 100  $\mu\text{m}$ .

Claim 14. (Original): A solidifying material according to claim 10, wherein said backing is made of polyethylene or polypropylene.

Claim 15. (Original): A solidifying material according to claim 10, wherein said backing is a film or sheet of from 1 to 1,200  $\mu\text{m}$  in thickness and of from 95 to 100% in porosity.

Claim 16. (Original): A solidifying material according to claim 10, further comprising not greater than 85 wt.%, based on said polymer, of an elastomer non-compatible with said electrolyte solution.

Claim 17. (Currently Amended): A cell comprising, as a constituent element, a solidifying material according to ~~any one of claims 10-16~~ Claim 10.

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BASIS FOR AMENDMENT

In view of the cancellation of Claims 1-9, the claims have been amended to provide for proper antecedent basis and to eliminate multiple dependency. No new matter has been introduced thereby.